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*Corresponding author: Mohammad Amin Mozaheb, Department of Foreign Languages, Imam Sadiq (A) University, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
E-mail: mozaheb.ma@gmail.com

CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Where the difference lies: Teachers' perceptions toward cultural content of ELT books in three circles of world Englishes

Abbas Monfared[1], Mohammad Amin Mozaheb[2]* and Mostafa Shahiditabar[2]

Abstract: Drawing on the literature on culture and intercultural communication, current discussions surrounding English as an international language (EIL), and cultural appropriation of ELT books in local communities, this article reports the findings of a qualitative and qualitative research study with English language teachers from Inner (40 American, 36 British), Outer (44 Indian, 40 Malaysian), and Expanding (44 Iranian and 40 Turkish) circles based on Kachru's model (1992) to explore their attitudes toward cultural content of ELT books within the framework of EIL and how they see themselves in relation to the language and culture. The findings demonstrate that most teachers are in favor of implementation of EIL and culture and understanding their perceptions plays a key role in this matter. The findings also highlight the "glocal" aspect of English that the ELT materials should include a blending of cultures, both local and international, so that learners can naturally merge their local experiences and cultures with those that are offered in the ELT materials. This article argues that together with valuing intercultural communication and awareness, it is important to promote ways for the development of EIL and culture in the classroom. Issues like cultural representation, cultural priority of teachers and students, cultural presence within the EIL framework in ELT books and pluralistic and dynamic feature of English language with cultural diversity in the globalized world must be heard and not assumed in order to develop cultural awareness.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Abbas Monfared is a PHD Candidate in Applied Linguistics at Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. Mohammad Amin Mozaheb is an Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics at the Department of Foreign Languages at Imam Sadiq (A) University, Tehran, Iran. Mostafa Shahiditabar is also a Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages at Imam Sadiq (A) University, Tehran, Iran. Research interests of the authors include Intercultural Communication, World Englishes, and EIL. The present study is part of a global project focusing on different circles of teachers i.e. Inner, Outer and Expanding ones.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of teachers in Inner, Outer and Expanding circles, based on Kachru's model (1992), towards the role of culture within the framework of English as an International Language (EIL) and how they see themselves in relation to the language and culture. We surveyed 244 English language teachers based on a quantitative and qualitative research study to demonstrate to what extent they are in favor of implementation of EIL and culture in English language teaching contexts. Our findings suggest that the "glocal" aspect of English, a blending of both local and international cultures, should be highly considered in ELT materials and ELT contexts. Therefore, developing some ways for the promotion of EIL and culture in the classrooms and also raising awareness of teachers towards this important concept are highly suggested in the globalized world with cultural varieties.

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1. Introduction

The rapid spread of English has inspired many scholars to look into the probability of shifting from traditional English as a native language pedagogy in ELT to EIL (English as an International Language (Jenkins, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012; Sharifian, 2009). Taken together, the goal of teaching English today from an EIL perspective is to prepare the learners to use English to become part of the globalized world, which is linguistically and culturally varied, and thus both teachers and EIL courses should prepare learners for such diversity and to represent English as a pluralistic and dynamic component rather than a monolithic and static one. Traditionally, curriculum developers have presumed that American or British English should be the target language in ESL/EFL curriculum. The emergence of other possible models happened when Kachru (1985, 1986) distinguished among three circles of English. According to Kachru (1986), these circles set up "three distinct types of speech fellowships of English, phases of the spread of the language, and particular characteristics of the uses of the language and of its acquisition and linguistic innovations" (p. 122). As McKay (2012, p. 10) puts it "traditionally L2 pedagogy and research have been dominated by the assumption that the goal of bilingual users of English is to achieve native-like competence in English. However, for those individuals who use English essentially as a language of wider communication alongside one or more other languages they speak, achieving native-like competence is often not necessary or desired." Cook (1999) refers to this as "the comparative fallacy" of relating the L2 learner to the native speaker. English now as a global lingua franca serves to connect the world (Crystal, 2003) and ease cultural understanding across societies but the problem is imposing communication norms and creating divisions between haves and have-nots (Phan, 2008).

Undeniably, "the term EIL as an umbrella term" to characterize the use of English between any L2 speakers of English (McKay, 2010, p. 91) has changed all attitudes toward English. As Kachru, Kachru, and Nelson (2001, p. 21) state, "Today, English is spoken and taught worldwide and the language is used primarily by non-native speakers to communicate with non-native speakers." So the challenging question raised is, Can NS model as a monolingual and mono-cultural norm help us as an ideal model in the realm of ELT.

Considering the above-mentioned issue, it would seem that the English, globalization, standard norm and varieties of English across the globe are indeed complex issues. One of the most challenging issues in the realm of EIL is the matter of cultural content of ELT books. Cortazi and Jin (1999) change their focus away from traditional UK and the USA models when they differentiate among three types of culture: *target culture* including the culture(s) of Inner-Circle countries; *international target cultures* involving a combination of Inner-and Outer-Circle countries; and *source culture*, which is the students' culture (pp. 204–205).Why is the importance of culture and why would anyone want to learn about their own culture in English? McKay (2003) answers logically that students need to talk about their own culture when they talk to people from other cultures.

Although a number of studies have been accomplished on teachers' and learners' attitudes toward EIL, there are fewer studies that are concerned with the perceptions of teachers regarding cultural content of ESL/EFL curricula. The present study investigated the developing picture of culture within the framework of EIL from the perspective of teachers from inner, outer, and expanding circles in the globalized world.

2. Review of related literature

2.1. EIL: a new paradigm

Undoubtedly, in the past 20 years or so the phenomenon of globalization has had a profound effect on the profusion of English in the world (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). Modern technological and demographic growths have also added to the continuing internationalization of English language, finally changing both in the way it is used and conceptualized. Like any other language, English is included in natural way of change; but the situations under which these presently happen in English have increased as it comes into more interaction with other languages and is spoken by progressively diverse users and learners across many different communities. Sharifian (2009, p. 2) in his book EIL defines EIL as a paradigm shift in TESOL, SLA, and the applied linguistics of English, partly in response to the complexities that are associated with the "tremendously rapid spread of English" around the globe in recent decades. Sharifian (2009) writes,

> As a paradigm, EIL calls for a critical revisiting of the notions, analytical tools, approaches and methodologies within the established disciplines such as the sociolinguistics of English and TESOL, which explored various aspects of the English language. One of the central themes of EIL as a paradigm is its recognition of World Englishes, regardless of which "circles" they belong to (Bolton, 2004; Kachru, 1986, 1992, p. 2)

Kachru (1986, 1992) described the role and use of English around the world using a model that involves three concentric circles: Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle countries. Inner Circle countries include countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), America, Canada, and Australia where English is used as the first language. The Outer Circle countries—such as India, Nigeria, and Singapore are multilingual and English has the status of a second language along with other languages. Finally, the Expanding Circle includes countries—such as Iran, China, and South Korea where English has the place of a foreign language in teaching and learning. Indisputably, major users and learners of English are bilingual and multilingual speakers from the outer and expanding circles.

According to Matsuda (2003), EIL paradigm also emphasizes the relevance of World Englishes to ELT. In EIL contexts, speakers come from different national and cultural backgrounds. As Canagarajah (2006) observes, because of the rapid spread of outer-circle and expanding-circle Englishes into the inner-circle countries, no longer World Englishes should be considered as three circles proposed by Kachrue. He defines that now vast majority of speakers from the Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle countries live in the Inner-Circle countries, even native speakers of English are more exposed to World Englishes. Canagarajah (2006, p. 233) continues that, "in a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties [of English] and communities, proficiency becomes complex … one needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication." This can also refer to revising the notion of "proficiency" even for native speakers of English.

2.2. Culture and intercultural competence

Culture has long been an important part of second language (L2) teaching and learning and has attracted the attention of many great scholars in this field (Baker, 2011, 2012, 2015; Byram, 1988, 1997; Kumaravadivelu, 2012; McKay, 2012).

Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009, pp. 6–7) define culture as "enduring yet evolving intergenerational attitudes, values, beliefs, rituals/customs, and behavioral patterns into which people are born but that is structurationally created and maintained by people's ongoing actions." So, when interaction happens among people from different cultures, it can be assumed as involving intercultural communication competence. Byram (1988, p. 82) also describes culture as knowledge which is "shared and negotiated between people," and "much of that knowledge is symbolically expressed in artefacts and behaviors and is formulated as rules, norms, expectations, as moral and legal codes, as proverbs, as parental injunctions to children." Following Byram (1988), Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi

(1990) distinguish the cultural elements based on four separate sorts of "culture" that language teaching may involve: the esthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic sense. Culture in the esthetic sense refers to such cultural forms as the media, cinema, music, and literature. In the sociological sense, it involves the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions. Culture in semantic sense refers to the conceptual system embodied in the language. From pragmatic aspect, culture includes the background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that, in addition to mastery of the language code, make possible successful communication. According to Baker (2015, p. 132), different characterizations of intercultural competence share an understanding of intercultural communication as:

(1) knowledge of different communicative practices in different sociocultural settings;

(2) the skills to be able to employ this knowledge appropriately and flexibly; and

(3) attitudes toward communication that involve the ability to de-center and relativize one's own values, beliefs, and expectations.

However, with the rising emphasis on culture teaching and intercultural awareness, intercultural competence has been considered as an important factor of communicative competence. According to Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2008), intercultural competence involves not only knowledge of cultural factors in the target language but also intercultural awareness, i.e. knowledge of cultures other than L1 and target language culture.

2.3. EIL as cross-cultural communication

Kumaravadivelu (2012, p. 9) has reviewed different paradigms of culture including "static" and "dynamic" ones. His main emphasis on "dynamic paradigm" reveals the importance of intercultural interaction in learning and knowledge transfer in the globalized world. He believes that the ongoing process of cultural globalization with its incessant and increased flow of peoples, goods, and ideas across the world has created a novel "web of interlocution" and the teaching of EIL cannot remain insulated and isolated from globalization's impact on the formation of individual identities of English language learners, teachers, and teacher educators around the world. He furthers considers that nothing less than an epistemic break is required in order to help EIL professionals meet the challenges of teaching English which is marked by globality as well as coloniality and suggests the following principles in the realm of EIL:

• Breaking the Dependency on Western Terminologies.

• Breaking the Dependency on Western Knowledge Production (finding an alternative model of SLA that is not constrained by Western-oriented epistemes).

• Breaking the Dependency on Center-based Methods (such as audiolingual, communicative) and striving to design context-specific, locally generated instructional strategies.

• Breaking the Dependency on Center-based Cultural Competence.

• Breaking the Dependency on the Center-based Textbook Industry which just present Western cultural values.

Following Kumaravadivelu, McKay (2012, p. 42) believes that principles such as promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism, localization of L2 language planning and policies, developing awareness of students to language variation, and equal access to English learning for all who desire it should be considered in an EIL pedagogy.

Two other important issues regarding the effect of globalization on culture are the hybridization and homogenization of cultures. Garrett (2010, pp. 448–449) links homogenization with the spread of Western cultures through cultural media products such as movies and television programs with the purpose of replacing the cultures in which they are distributed. Hybridizations view reflects "the

localization of Western cultures to adapt to new contexts." Tendency toward hybridization view is one of the main goals of EIL in the globalized world.

2.4. Cultural content of ELT books from an EIL perspective

An important criterion for EIL text development is whether the learners are exposed to different varieties of English, and whether they are made conscious of the superdiversity of cultures. McKay and BokhorstHeng (2008, p. 2) consider globalization as a "reformulation of social space in which the global and local are constantly interacting with one another." They also discuss that "neither one should be afforded a dominant position". This "glocal" aspect implies that the English-speaking world that the ELT materials present should include a blending of cultures, both local and international, so that learners can naturally merge their local experiences and cultures with those that are offered in the ELT materials.

The fact that English is frequently used for cross-cultural communication suggests that curricula should be culturally sensitive, encouraging learners to learn about other cultures as a way of reflecting on their own values and beliefs. The goal then is not to learn primarily about the culture of English-speaking countries but rather to learn about many cultures and about differing cultural values as a way of increasing the learners' sensitivity to cross-cultural differences. McKay (2002), in proposing that the "de-nationalization" of English ownership by Smith (1992) in shaping a world language be renamed as "re-nationalization" (p. 12), refers to the main role of culture in the teaching of EIL. McKay (2002) proposes that in the teaching of EIL, culture be paid distinct attention to in the curriculum. She analytically studies three main sources of content for language teaching materials—cultural content from English-speaking countries, local cultural content, and international cultural content, proposing an approach to the teaching of culture in EIL teaching that develops the concept of "interculturalism" referred to Byram (1988). Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002, p. 22) define "interculturalism" in this way:

> An approach to teaching culture that seeks to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to understand and respect language users as individuals with complex multiple identities and avoid the stereotyping which accompanies identifying someone's person by their national or ethnic origins.

Harumi (2002) also proposes a new model with three ways for teaching culture with a new approach: Culture around language—focusing on customs of the various peoples using English in the world in diverse ways; Culture through language—learning about global cultures, while using English to do so; and finally, culture in language—the embedded belief systems of English speakers within the language.

Given this situation, McKay (2012, p. 42) proposes some principles that an EIL pedagogy should adhere to them:

- The promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism;
- Localized L2 language planning and policies;
- The development of an awareness of language variation and use for all students;
- A critical approach to the discourse surrounding the acquisition and use of English;
- Equal access to English learning for all who desire it; and
- A re-examination of the concept of qualified teachers of English.

Cultural values are embedded within language and communication styles and ways of knowing them can strongly influence how students engage with learning tasks and demonstrate mastery of them. The absence of shared communicative frames of reference, procedural protocols, rules of etiquette, and discourse systems makes it difficult for culturally diverse students and teachers to genuinely understand each other and for students to fully convey their intellectual abilities. Considering

well-designed teaching materials including abundant linguistic samples of world Englishes with an emphasis on culture, Brown (2012, pp. 155–156) suggests that EIL curriculum developers should make some changes such as

- Providing students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used, and furnish them with strategies for handling such differences.
- Using "global appropriacy and local appropriation" (Alptekin, 2002, p. 63) to help learners be "both global and local speakers of English" who can function both at home in their national culture as well as internationally.
- Respecting the local culture of learning and promoting a sense of ownership and confidence in the local varieties of English.
- Including cultural models of Outer-Circle and Expanding-Circle users of English so students realize that English does not belong exclusively to the Inner Circle.
- Include materials and activities based on local and international situations that are recognizable and applicable to the students' everyday lives, pertaining to both NS–NNS and NNS–NNS interactions.

Following Brown (2012), Matsuda (2012, pp. 176–177) further explains that in general English courses, where learners are preparing themselves for the use of English in international contexts, cultural content must be drawn from multiple sources. These sources can be topics such as world peace and environment conservation which are already popular in ELT teaching materials and they continue to provide appropriate content for readings, class discussions, and course assignments in EIL classrooms, as they help foster the sense of global citizenship among students. The second source can be the culture(s) of students' future interlocutors who can be from various parts of the world. The third possible source of cultural content for EIL materials is the learner's own culture. From this perspective, any materials that engage students to explain local culture and to work on skills to describe local culture in English can be legitimately incorporated into EIL classrooms.

3. Purpose of the study

This study aimed at investigating the developing picture of culture within the framework of EIL from the perspective of teachers from inner, outer, and expanding circles in the globalized world. To explore this area of interest further, the following research questions are formulated:

(1) What are Inner, Outer, and Expanding circle teachers' attitudes toward the presentation of culture in ELT classroom and text books?

(2) What are Inner, Outer, and Expanding circle teachers' preferences and expectations in relation to culture?

(3) To what extent do Inner, Outer, and Expanding circle teachers take a Westernized or an EIL perspective in response to the teaching of culture in ELT classrooms and textbooks?

4. Method

4.1. Participants

There were altogether 244 English teacher participants, who were all self-selected by responding to an email invitation to participate in this study. The email invitation was linked to a website where details of the study including research goals, what participants were expected to do could be found. Of the 244 participants, 76 were native teachers from the USA and Britain as members of inner-circle community; 84 were from India and Malaysia as members of outer circle and the last 84 were from Iran and Turkey as participants of expanding-circle community. Table 1 gives an overview of the general profile of all participants.

Table 1. General profile of participants						
Participants' general information	Iranian teachers	Turkish teachers	Indian teachers	Malaysian teachers	American teachers	British teachers
Gender						
Male	16	16	12	14	18	16
Female	28	24	32	26	22	20
Educational background						
BA degree	8	6	8	6	8	6
MA degree	28	24	20	22	18	14
PhD	8	10	16	12	14	16
Age						
21–30	6	8	12	8	8	10
31–40	24	24	24	16	22	10
41–50	12	4	6	6	8	8
50+	2	4	2	10	2	8
Teaching experience						
0–1	6	6	4	4	6	6
1–5	8	8	10	12	14	14
5–10	22	12	20	16	12	6
10+	8	14	10	8	8	10

4.2. Instrument and procedure

The data of this study were elicited using a survey questionnaire (Appendix 1). The questionnaire contained both close-ended and open-ended questions. Moreover, interviews were conducted with 10 Native English teachers, 10 Indians and Malaysian and 10 Iranian and Turkish teachers who had previously answered the questionnaires and had volunteered for the interviews. Basically, the interviews aimed at supplementing the findings of the questionnaires.

The questionnaire has two parts: firstly, teachers' background information (age, gender, teaching experience and educational background) and secondly, attitudes toward culture and culture-related matters. Questions ask about how to represent culture, which students' culture should be presented, the extent to which Western cultures is presented in ELT text books and whether native or non-native teacher can be a better choice in a local community.

Regarding the open-ended sections, teachers' responses were coded to yield quantitative data. An independent rater was also requested to code these sections to ensure reliability. The inter-rater reliability was .94; the questionable parts were reconsidered until reaching a point of agreement. The data were analyzed using SPSS software version 22.

Before the actual administration of the questionnaire, it was piloted with 25 English teachers in order for the purposes of content and linguistic validity. Six researchers were also consulted about whether the items in the questionnaire and the interview were clear and the scales were appropriate. Based on the feedback obtained, several modifications were done.

Concerning research ethics, the teachers were informed that they can withdraw at any time during the process of the study. Participants were assured that all the data collected were just for research only, and their confidentiality was protected during the study. All the interview data collection was recorded with the participants' permission. Researchers considered credibility and

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dependability by collecting data from as many contexts and situations as possible and using as two methods of data gathering triangulation can help to credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability.

5. Data analysis

Q2. Asks about the importance of learning about the culture of speakers of a language when learning that language. Most of the teachers in three circles believed that it is important to know about the culture of speakers of a language when learning it, with 98 (40.2%) who claimed to be "extremely important" and 92 (37.7%) to be "very important" and there were 42 (17.02%) who selected "fairly important" option. However, there were some Indian teachers, with 12 (4.9%) who claimed that it is not much important to know about the culture of a language when learning it (Tables 2–4).

A selection of responses by some teachers gives a partial insight to this issue:

IRIT: From my perspective, language and culture are intertwined in important ways. Also, we may not get some nuances of meaning if we are not well-acquainted with the culture.

TURKT: Learning a language becomes more meaningful when we learn the subtle nuances and deep aspects/meanings that are parts of the target culture.

INDT: Culture reflects on the language too. For instance in Tamil we have ways of addressing Brother, Sisters, Uncles and Aunts whereas it's not the same in English. At times people are just addressed by their names.

MALAYT: Culture becomes important only when a nonnative user meets native users very often either in a native country or in their own nonnative environment.

AMERT: The language is an integral part of human culture. Culture is a great part of how we learn, how we receive and filter information. Culture is reflected in language.

Table 2. Teachers' attitudes toward the importance of learning about the culture of speakers of a language when learning that language

Nationality	Extremely	Very	Fairly	Not much	Not at all	Total
Iranian	22 (50.0%)	16 (36.4%)	6 (13.6%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	44 (100.0%)
Turkish	20 (50.0%)	12 (30.0%)	8 (20.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
Indian	12 (27.3%)	14 (31.8%)	6 (13.6%)	12 (27.3%)	0 (.0%)	44 (100.0%)
Malaysian	14 (35.0%)	24 (60.0%)	2 (5.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
American	16 (40.0%)	12 (30.0%)	12 (30.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
British	14 (38.9%)	14 (38.9%)	8 (22.2%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	98 (40.2%)	92 (37.7%)	42 (17.2%)	12 (4.9%)	0 (.0%)	244 (100.0%)

Note: Chi-square = 37.133, $p < .05$.

Table 3. The amount of native-speakers' culture in EFL course books based on teachers' attitudes in three circles

Nationality	All	Most	Some	None	Total
Iranian	0 (.0%)	28 (63.6%)	14 (31.8%)	2 (4.5%)	44 (100.0%)
Turkish	8 (20.0%)	28 (70.0%)	4 (10.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
Indian	2 (4.5%)	8 (18.2%)	32 (72.7%)	2 (4.5%)	44 (100.0%)
Malaysian	4 (10.0%)	18 (45.0%)	18 (45.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
American	2 (5.0%)	20 (50.0%)	18 (45.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
British	4 (11.1%)	18 (50.0%)	14 (38.9%)	0 (.0%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	20 (8.2%)	120 (49.2%)	100 (41.0%)	4 (1.6%)	244 (100.0%)

Note: Chi-square = 27.415, $p < .05$.

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Table 4. Teachers' view toward the importance of providing students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used					
Nationality	**Extremely**	**Very**	**Fairly**	**Not much**	**Total**
Iranian	12 (27.3%)	18 (40.9%)	12 (27.3%)	2 (4.5%)	44 (100.0%)
Turkish	12 (30.0%)	16 (40.0%)	12 (30.0%)	0 (.0%)	20 (100.0%)
Indian	8 (18.2%)	8 (18.2%)	20 (45.5%)	8 (18.2%)	44 (100.0%)
Malaysian	10 (25.0%)	24 (60.0%)	6 (15.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
American	14 (35.0%)	10 (25.0%)	12 (30.0%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)
British	10 (27.8%)	10 (27.8%)	14 (38.9%)	2 (5.6%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	66 (27.0%)	86 (35.2%)	76 (31.1%)	16 (6.6%)	244 (100.0%)

Note: Chi-square = 18.980, $p > .05$.

> **BRITT:** You cannot understand the people of a country without knowing something about their culture and it is important to have some "general knowledge" about the world around us.

Q3. When asked "How much of the materials you use teaches the culture of native speaker countries (i.e. the USA or UK)?" The results showed no significant difference between teachers' opinion in three circles. However, expanding circle teachers believed that their materials include the most amount of Western culture.

Q4. Asks about the importance of providing students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used.

Teachers were also asked in the questionnaire and interviews to indicate the level of importance in how they preferred cultural content of ELT textbooks to be based local and international situations or to deal primarily with aspects of United States or British life and culture (Table 5).

Analysis of quantitative data shows that teachers hold an overall positive attitude toward learning and teaching about local and international cultures. Most of the teachers from three circles (about 87.0%) characterized the teaching of materials and activities based on local and international situations; however, there were some teachers (about 13%) who supported nativism and teaching English with more focus on Western culture.

Table 5. Teachers' preferences toward the cultural content of ELT course books			
Nationality	**Materials and activities based on local and international situations**	**Activities and materials that deals primarily with aspects of United States or British life and culture**	**Total**
Iranian	32 (72.7%)	12 (27.3%)	44 (100.0%)
Turkish	36 (90.0%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)
Indian	40 (90.9%)	4 (9.1%)	44 (100.0%)
Malaysian	36 (90.0%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)
American	36 (90.0%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)
British	32 (88.9%)	4 (11.1%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	212 (86.9%)	32 (13.1%)	244 (100.0%)

Note: Chi-square = 4.757, $p > .05$.

A few illustrative and/or peculiar examples of responses characterize teachers' preferences:

IRIT: By learning cultural differences, we will be able to implement it and remove misinterpretations in conversations between NS and NNS and ELT books are the best for this purpose.

INDT: To bridge the gap between cultures, we do need to know where we are coming from and where we are going to. These cultural items in ELT books may be the springboard to cross-cultural communication and better understanding of cultural differences (interculturality and/or multiculturality development).

AMERT: Learning English is not important because it is English, learning English is important because it is the world's lingua franca-for better, or for worse. Now, in the glocal world, it's necessary to know each other's cultures which can be presented in ELT books.

However there were some teachers who disagreed with this glocal perspective:

INDT: English just belongs to native speakers. When we learn English, we should learn the culture of target language and it doesn't matter to know about the culture of other countries.

IRIT: Western culture is superior to other cultures and I always try to present Native-people cultures to my students.

Q6. Characterizes teachers' opinions regarding students' cultural preferences. Remarkably, most teachers do not attach much importance to studying about British or American culture regarding students' cultural preferences. Majority of teachers (about 72%) believe that students prefer international culture to native or local culture. However, there were some teachers who hold the view that students prefer nativism (about 12%) and some advocate local culture (15.6%) (Table 6).

Q7. When asked "Have you ever been asked questions about cultural information in a textbook that you could not answer?," the results revealed that about 72% of teachers have been asked about cultural information in textbooks that they could not answer and this emphasizes cultural awareness of teachers in ELT classrooms. In case of not having enough cultural information, 85% of teachers stated that they tell students *they don't know,* some mentioned that *they ignore* (12%), and some also *quickly invented an answer* (3%). An interesting point regarding this question was that teachers who do not answer try to go on the Internet or refer to encyclopedias to find the answer and give them enough cultural information.

Teachers in question 8 were also asked in the questionnaire and interviews to indicate the level of importance in how they provide students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used other than providing them with just Native British or American English. Most of the teachers in three circles displayed a cultural-centered

Table 6. Teachers' opinions regarding students' cultural preferences			
Nationality	**Local culture**	**British or American culture**	**International culture**	**Total**
Iranian	4 (9.1%)	6 (13.6%)	34 (77.3%)	44 (100.0%)
Turkish	6 (15.0%)	0 (.0%)	34 (85.0%)	40 (100.0%)
Indian	8 (18.2%)	6 (13.26%)	30 (68.2%)	44 (100.0%)
Malaysian	6 (15.0%)	0 (.0%)	34 (85.0%)	40 (100.0%)
American	6 (15.0%)	10 (25.0%)	24 (60.0%)	40 (100.0%)
British	8 (22.2%)	8 (22.2%)	20 (55.6%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	38 (15.6%)	30 (12.3%)	178 (72.1%)	244 (100.0%)

Note: Chi-square = 12.404, $p > .05$.

Table 7. The extent to which teachers provide students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts other Native British or American English						
Nationality	**Always**	**Very often**	**Regularly**	**Rarely**	**Never**	**Total**
Iranian	22 (50.0)	16 (36.4%)	6 (13.6%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	44 (100.0%)
Turkish	20 (50.0%)	12 (30.0%)	8 (20.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
Indian	12 (27.3%)	14 (31.8%)	6 (13.6%)	12 (27.3%)	0 (.0%)	44 (100.0%)
Malaysian	14 (35.0%)	24 (60.0%)	2 (5.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
American	16 (40.0%)	12 (30.0%)	12 (30.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	40 (100.0%)
British	14 (38.9%)	14 (38.9%)	8 (22.2%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%	36 (100.0%)
Total	98 (40.2%)	92 (37.7%)	42 (17.2%)	12 (4.9%)	0 (.0%)	244 (100.0%)

Note: Chi-square = 19.442, *p* > .05.

Table 8. The best teacher in a local community based on teachers' attitudes		
Nationality	**Multi-lingual non-native English teacher**	**Native English teacher**	**Total**
Iranian	34 (77.3%)	10 (22.7%)	44 (100.0%)
Turkish	36 (90.0%)	4 (10.0%)	40 (100.0%)
Indian	40 (86.4%)	4 (13.6%)	44 (100.0%)
Malaysian	38 (85.0%)	6 (15.0%)	40 (100.0%)
American	24 (60.0%)	16 (40.0%)	40 (100.0%)
British	22 (61.1%)	14 (38.9%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	188 (77.0%)	56 (23.0%)	244 (100.0%)

Note: Chi-square = 22.594, *p* < .05.

viewpoint which emphasizes the importance of culture in teaching English. Remarkably, 40.2% of teachers stated they always provide students with this awareness and 37.7 and 17.2% of teacher held the view that they very often and regularly afford this awareness (Table 7).

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in question 9 shows that most of the teachers hold an overall positive attitude toward non-native English teachers in local communities. Non-native English teacher in local community is seen by 77.0% of the teachers in three circles as the choice. However, some teachers (23%) hold the view that native-teacher can be a better choice in local community. A detailed analysis of responses can be seen in Table 8.

6. Discussion
On reflection, teachers viewed learning culture in ELT very positively. However, if, on the one hand, they regarded British culture, American culture, international cultural aspects not specific to any country, and other English native cultures as important, they did not have the same opinion about ESL and EFL cultures. Most teachers regarded ESL and EFL cultures as quite unimportant. Apparently, they have not assimilated the importance of non-native cultures, although several teachers have observed that teaching materials should focus on native as well as non-native communities.

However, teachers also referred to the importance of international cultural aspects in language classes. This may indicate that besides appreciating British and American cultures, teachers are also interested in approaching EIL, which seems to reinforce Gnutzmann's (1999) opinion that rather than focusing on target culture specific topics, a stronger orientation toward international topics should be more appropriate in teaching EIL.

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7. Conclusion

Based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data using a semi-structured questionnaire, supplemented by an interview, the present study examined the attitudes of inner circle (40 American, 36 British), outer circle (44 Indian, 40 Malaysian), and expanding circle teachers (44 Iranian and 40 Turkish), based on Kachru's model (1992), toward culture within the framework of EIL (see Appendix 1).

The results of the current study showed that the most practical issue in the realm of EIL is the transfer of the cultural component of English Teaching from native language cultures to global and local ones. Furthermore, classroom teachers as the fore front of many pedagogical modifications play an important role in educational contexts and understanding their perceptions play a key role in this matter.

This study also investigated teachers' attitudes toward cultural content of books. Analysis of quantitative data shows that teachers hold an overall positive attitude toward learning and teaching about local and international cultures. Most of the teachers from three circles (about 87.0%) characterized the teaching of materials and activities based on local and international situations; however, there were some teachers (about 13%) who supported nativism and teaching English with more focus on Western culture.

Teachers were also asked in the questionnaire and interviews to indicate the level of importance in how they provide students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used other than providing them with just Native British or American English. Most of the teachers in three circles displayed a cultural-centered viewpoint which emphasizes the importance of culture in teaching English.

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data shows that most of the teachers hold an overall positive attitude toward non-native English teachers in local communities. Non-native English teacher in local community is seen by 77.0% of the teachers in three circles as the choice. However, some teachers (23%) hold the view that native-teacher can be a better choice in local community.

Considering pedagogical implications of this study, Jenkins (2006, p. 174) considers that rather than sticking to NS-based norms, teachers should try to raise learners' awareness of different varieties of English and help them to improve their confidence. Following Jenkins, McKay (2012) puts emphasis on language awareness among all users of English, including both L1 and L2 speakers. He believes that EIL users should be aware of notions such as language innovation, varying linguistic and pragmatic norms, negotiation strategies, and social sensitivity in language use.

Author details
Abbas Monfared[1]
E-mail: a_monfared85@yahoo.com
Mohammad Amin Mozaheb[2]
E-mail: mozaheb.ma@gmail.com
Mostafa Shahiditabar[2]
E-mail: m_shahidi2005@yahoo.com
[1] Faculty of English Language and Literature, Allameh Tabatab'i University, Tehran, Iran.
[2] Department of Foreign Languages, Imam Sadiq (A) University, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

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Appendix 1. Dear Colleagues:

I greatly appreciate you completing the following short questionnaire which seeks to investigate your opinion regarding culture and varieties of English.

Name:

Age: ☐ 21–30 ☐ 31–40 ☐ 41–50 ☐ 51

Gender: ☐ **Male**   ☐ **Female**

Years of teaching experience: ☐ 0– 1 ☐ 1–5   ☐ 5–10   ☐ 10+

Professional qualifications:

☐ **BA in English Language and Literature**

☐ **MA in _____**   ☐ **Other _____**

Nationality:

1. Are you a native speaker of an English dialect?

   ☐ Yes (which one?.......................................)   ☐ No (I am: ....)

2. Do you think it is important to learn about the culture of speakers of a language when we learn that language?

   ☐ extremely   ☐ very   ☐ fairly   ☐ not much   ☐ not at all

   Briefly give reasons for your answer:

   ....

3. How much of the materials you use teaches the culture of native speaker countries (i.e. the USA or UK)?

   ☐ all   ☐ most   ☐ some   ☐ none

   Briefly give reasons for your answer:

   ....

4. How much do you think English materials should provide students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used?

   ☐ extremely   ☐ very   ☐ fairly   ☐ not much   ☐ not at all

5. Which type of cultural content would you prefer to use in your English class?

   A—Cultural content that deals with local places and people of your country.

   B—Cultural content that deals primarily with aspects of United States or British life and culture.

   C—Cultural content that deals with the life and culture of various countries around the world.

   Briefly give reasons for your answer:

   ....

6. What do you think about the cultural content of English books?

(a) It should include materials and activities based on local and international situations that are recognizable and applicable to the students' everyday lives, pertaining to both NS–NNS and NNS–NNS interactions.

(b) It should include activities and materials that deal primarily with aspects of United States or British life and culture.

7. Which type of cultural content do you feel that your students like best?

A—Content that deals with local places and people of their own country.

B—Content that deals primarily with aspects of United States or British life and culture.

C—Content that deals with the life and culture of various countries around the world.

Briefly give reasons for your answer:

....

8. Have you ever been asked questions about cultural information in a textbook that you could not answer?

A—Yes.

B—No.

If **yes**, what did you do?

A—I ignored the question.

B—I quickly invented an answer.

C—I told the students that I didn't know but that I would try to find out.

D—Other: _____

9. Do you try to provide students with awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in the various contexts in which English is learned and used other than providing them with just Native British or American English?

☐ always ☐ very often ☐ regularly ☐ rarely ☐ never

Briefly give reasons for your answer:

....

10. Who can be a better choice in teaching English in a local community?

(a) Multilingual non-native teacher because of being familiar with local culture can better attend to the needs of learners.

(b) Native English teacher can be a better choice and culture has no role in this matter.

11. What focus do the following areas receive during your English lessons?

Life, politics, economy and society of British/American people

☐ too much   ☐ sufficient   ☐ need more   ☐ not at all

Life, politics, economy and society of your own country

☐ too much   ☐ sufficient   ☐ need more   ☐ not at all

Comparing life, politics, economy and society of people in different countries

☐ too much   ☐ sufficient   ☐ need more   ☐ not at all

British/American literature, film, music

☐ too much   ☐ sufficient   ☐ need more   ☐ not at all

Literature, film and music of your own country

☐ too much   ☐ sufficient   ☐ need more   ☐ not at all

Comparing literature, music and film of different countries

☐ too much   ☐ sufficient   ☐ need more   ☐ not at all

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